

MASSACHUSETTS—MERRIMACK MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

MEMORIAL

OF THE

MERRIMACK MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

JANUARY 28, 1833.

Referred to the Committee of the Whole House, to which is committed the bill H. R. No. 641, to reduce and otherwise alter the duties on imports.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled.

The remonstrance of the Merrimack Manufacturing Company,

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH:

That this company is established at Lowell, in the State of Massachusetts, for the making and printing of cotton goods.

That they have expended in buildings, machinery, and apparatus for printing, beaching, and dying, one million and a half of dollars.

That it is with feelings of alarm, mingled with incredulity, that your remonstrants have been informed that the passage of a bill was contemplated by Congress, by one provision of which they were to be deprived, without notice, and in contravention to what they had a fair right to believe, and had in practice proved that they did believe, to be the settled policy of the country, of the protection under which their establishment has grown up. That they cannot now believe that the sanction of Congress will be given to a clause, of which the effect will be so utterly ruinous to the immense capital invested in the printing business, and which will deprive so many individuals of the means of daily subsistence.

It is not the intention of your remonstrants to enter into a discussion of the principles of the protective policy, however strong may be their personal convictions. They will confine themselves strictly to the effect of the proposed measure upon the printing business, leaving it to the intelligence of Congress to draw the inference how far the acknowledged success of the cotton manufacture, especially in the coarser fabrics, affords a pledge that similar results will follow the continued patronage of the Government to their branch of the art.

The original introduction of this business was attended with great delay, difficulties, and expense. It is one peculiarly requiring science and skill, of

a kind which there was no body of men possessed of at that time in this country. The best artificers in the various departments of engraving, dying, and printing, were procured from England, and of course enhanced wages, and the whole expense of the removal of themselves and families, were guarantied to them. For this enormous expense, your remonstrants have as yet received no adequate remuneration. The introduction of costly machines was another source of great, and if the business should now be abandoned, unrequited expense.

Such have been some of the difficulties which your remonstrants encountered in their undertaking. These difficulties have been successfully struggled with; the requisite skill has been attained; the expenses incident to a new enterprise are daily diminishing; and every assurance is felt that time and a reasonable security against sudden and violent fluctuations, are alone required to give permanency and success to their labors.

At this critical moment, your remonstrants have been informed that it was proposed to prostrate their manufacture by the reduction of the duty to 20 per cent ad valorem, a measure which, they have no hesitation in saying, would be equivalent to a free admission of foreign prints. Not a yard of cotton goods could, in their judgment, be printed under the proposed reduction.

Nor is this assertion unadvisedly made. Nearly one half of cost of printing calicoes consists in the two items of labor and fuel. The former is about 40, the latter nearly 200 per cent. dearer here than in England. Your remonstrants are well persuaded that it is not the intention of the Legislature to reduce the wages of labor to the standard of British industry, depressed as that is by a most artificial system, and starving, as their operatives would necessarily be, but for the frequent interposition of parochial relief.

In this item of labor, this company disburses, in the print works alone, upwards of \$80,000 per annum.

However opinions may conflict on the general expediency of the tariff, it is presumed that the above statement will be admitted to present a strong claim for legislative protection. Nor are the interests of your remonstrants alone involved in this question. A great part of the money expended is for the purchase of articles produced by the industry of other classes of men, and in other parts of the country.

To illustrate this, it may be mentioned that upwards of eighteen thousand gallons of oil, and eight thousand tons of Pennsylvania coal, were consumed in the town of Lowell the last year. More than \$44,000 was paid by this company for madder; \$52,000 for indigo; \$44,000 for flour, starch, copperas, lime, blankets, chemicals, the products of the fields, the mines, the workshops, of other States. So closely has this department of industry entwined itself with all the rest, that it cannot be lopped off without communicating some portion of the suffering to them. Your remonstrants will not allude to the article of cotton (of which this company consumes alone, annually, 4,200 bales, and the town of Lowell upwards of 20,000) except to make one suggestion which they have never seen publicly noticed. It is this—that as England imports about as much cotton from other countries as she does from the United States, every yard of American prints which is displaced to substitute British, is in effect displacing one half the weight of our own cotton to substitute that of foreign countries.

The limits of a memorial of this nature preclude further details on the ruinous operation of the proposed measure upon the business of printing,

and all the interests connected with it. Enough has been said to authorize this appeal to the justice of Congress, and the inquiry whether they will suffer a branch of industry, established at great expense on the faith of the protection held out by the Government, to be prostrated in a moment just as the fruits of so much expenditure were beginning to be realized? Such has not been the policy of other nations. Such has not been the policy of England.

The encouragement held out to the Flemish weavers, was the first source of the successful introduction of the woollen trade into Great Britain, and from that time to the present she has constantly afforded an early protection to all the branches of art and manufactures which had sprung up in her soil, and continued that protection till they had become established beyond the fear of competition. At this moment, while cotton goods, in general, are admitted at a duty of 10 per cent., your remonstrants are informed that, to exclude the finer fabrics of France, an impost is laid on this very article of prints of 3½d sterling the square yard. And, it is observable that whenever the Government of Great Britain has wished to lay a duty for protection, it has been a specific and not an ad valorem duty.

Such a duty is believed to be adequate, easy of collection, not liable to frauds, independent of the fluctuations of foreign markets, and more just in principle than any ad valorem duty whatever.

Therefore, as an adequate security to their property, and to countervail the above British duty, in conformity with the suggestion of the President of the United States, your petitioners respectfully pray that if, in their wisdom, Congress should see fit to reduce the duty on cotton goods generally, an additional specific duty may be laid upon imported colored and printed goods of not less than 7½ cents the square yard.

J. A. LOWELL,	} <i>Directors.</i>
P. T. JACKSON,	
GEO. W. LYMAN,	
J. THORNDYKE,	
KIRK BOOTT,	

January 19th, 1833.

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